DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 267 884 JC 860 191

TITLE Toward Excellence in California's Community Colleges.

INSTITUTION Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Sacramento.; Association of California Community Coll. Administrators.; California Association of Community Colleges, Sacramento.; California Community Colleges, Sacramento. Faculty Association.

PUB DATE 13 Jan 86

NOTE 12p.; Other organizations participating in the development of these recommendations were: California Community College Trustees, California Community College Urban District Association, Community College Association of California Teachers Association, Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges, Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers and Low Revenue Districts of the California Community Colleges.

PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Articulation (Education); Associate Degrees; *Community Colleges; Community Services; *Educational Assessment; Educational Finance; *Educational Quality; Governance; Remedial Instruction; Transfer Policy; Two Year Colleges; Vocational Education

IDENTIFIERS *California

ABSTRACT

The recommendations presented in this report were developed and unanimously supported by ten major California community college organizations to address systemwide strengths and weaknesses. Following a brief statement of the issue, recommendations are provided for the following areas: (1) student access and success, reaffirming the open door policy and stressing the importance of student assessment, counseling, and outcomes monitoring to ensure the opportunity for success; (2) the associate degree, asserting that the associate degree program must consist of a coherent and tightly knit sequence of courses capped by an evaluation process; (3) transfer education, urging all segments of postsecondary education in the state to establish a transfer core curriculum that would ensure transfer to a four-year college or university in California; (4) vocational education, pointing to weaknesses in the areas of facilities and equipment, linkages between counseling and training and the job market, improved articulation with elementary-secondary education, program accountability, and faculty development; (5) remedial education, offering principles and guidelines for the provision of services and courses; (6) community service, recommending that community colleges be permitted to offer any self-supporting community service courses reflecting the needs and interests of the community; (7) finance, underscoring the need for adequate funding from a combination of local and state revenues; and (8) governance, setting forth a series of recommendation regarding the appropriate roles of the legislature, governor, board of governors, district boads, academic senate, faculty, and staff. (EJV)

ED267884

TOWARD EXCELLENCE

IN CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

January 13, 1986

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The California Community College Organizations

INTRODUCTION

These recommendations have been developed and are supported unanimously by ten major statewide community college organizations. The recommendations reflect what are believed to be elements of the basic foundations of the community colleges' mission, governance and finance.

These recommendations confront our strengths and weaknesses, recognize the need for appropriate change and provide the means for delivering quality education which meets the needs of California's citizens. Without question, each organization has additional elements which it believes should be included. However, all agree what we present provides a solid base which if fully implemented would move California's community colleges even further toward excellence.

The recommendations were developed following review of the reports and work of the staff of the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education, the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, the Learning Assessment Retention Consortium, the Joint Governance Commission and the Occupational Education Coalition.

Participating Organizations

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

Association of California Community College Administrators

California Association of Community Colleges

California Community College Trustees

California Community College Urban District Association

Community College Association of California Teachers Association

Chief Executive Officers - California Community Colleges

Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers

Faculty Association of the California Community Colleges

Low Revenue Districts of the California Community Colleges

Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges
(As observers)

1/13/86

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

California's community colleges are faced with the challenge of helping prepare an increasingly diverse population for successful and productive lives in an increasingly complex society.

There is and will continue to be a need in California for postsecondary education opportunities that are accessible to those who are prepared to succeed immediately as well as those who require special assistance.

In addition to being accessible, however, institutions must provide students with the opportunities for success and should be held accountable for demonstrating efforts toward improving student outcomes.

Students, regardless of educational preparation, also should be responsible for making satisfactory progress toward their educational objectives.

Recommendations

- The community colleges should remain "open-door" institutions for all high school graduates and others who can profit from instruction.

- To address the vastly differing academic backgrounds and abilities of students and to ensure the opportunity for success, community colleges should require students to be assessed, to receive educational counseling and to establish educational objectives.

- Minimum competency skill levels should be established by local districts for educational programs and courses offered. Access to particular community college courses then would be based upon the student's assessment, background and educational counseling.

- The community colleges should monitor the progress of students in achieving their educational objectives.

- The state should support with appropriate levels of funding these access and success programs.

- The community colleges should develop programs to measure and report on the effect of these recommendations. Such programs would include the following elements:
    - Creation of student outcome evaluation criteria that would be consistent among districts.
    - Establishment of local institutional goals based on the statewide evaluation criteria, state education policy and local community expectations.
    - Documentation by districts of progress made toward achieving those goals.
    - Development of a statewide data base in the Chancellor's Office to document statewide relevant data on the evaluation criteria.
    - Issuance of periodic reports and analysis to the legislature, Governor, local districts and public relative to the academic progress being made by students.

ASSOCIATE DEGREE

The associate degree is an important focus of the mission of the community colleges, reflecting the larger goals of educational attainment the institution holds for its students.

When appropriately defined, the associate degree becomes an integrating force for the institution, serves as an important student guide, and requires commitment on the part of the student for program completion.

Recommendations

- The associate degree program must consist of a coherent and tightly knit sequence of courses capped by an evaluation process, either at the course level or comprehensively, or both. All degree programs must include the opportunity for the student to demonstrate proficiency in the use of language and computation.

  In addition, all associate degree programs must reflect those characteristics that help define what constitutes an educated person. Such characteristics include a level of general education that enables the individual to understand and appreciate his/her culture and environment; the development of a system of personal values based on accepted ethics that lead to civic and social responsibility; and the attainment of skills in analysis, communication, quantification and synthesis necessary for further growth as a lifespan learner and a productive member of society.

- The associate degree must indicate that the holder has developed proficiencies sufficient to prepare for upper division collegiate work, or to enter directly into a specific occupation with confidence.

- It is the responsibility of the teaching faculty and academic staff to design, monitor and evaluate the specific associate degree programs offered by the institution. This process must involve consultation with others, both inside and outside the institution.

- The Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees should primarily prepare the student to transfer to upper division collegiate work. Students awarded Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees should be accepted as junior level transfers in baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. To accomplish this UC, CSU and the community colleges should develop associate degree core curricula.

- The evaluation of associate degree programs must include a continuing dialogue concerning associate degree quality and the relative success of the college's graduates.

TRANSFER EDUCATION

The need to increase community college transfers must be addressed intersegmentally.

And effort must be made for more and better research on transfer students, processes and programs; in so doing the three segments should establish a mutually acceptable definition of transfer and methods of counting transfer students.

Matriculation and articulation programs are also key to the success of transfer education.

The Associate Degree would be strengthened if it were linked to university transfer. The Associate Degree should be the principal means of transfer. It should not, however, be the only way.

Academic Senates at the community colleges, UC, CSU and the independents are primarily responsible for ensuring comparable rigor and course content.

Recommendations

- The community colleges, UC, CSU and the independents should establish a transfer core curriculum that upon completion would ensure transfer to a four-year college or university in California.

  This core curriculum should be articulated with the K-12 system to assure smooth progress from one end of the transfer continuum to the other.

  All students who were not eligible for UC or CSU admission from high school should be required to complete the core curriculum prior to transferring to UC and CSU. Exceptions could be made for those students with only one or two course or subject deficiencies.

- The community colleges should work with local high schools to develop articulated programs to increase the preparation of high school students for entry into community college and to insure a smooth transition for students from high school to community college.

- The Chancellor's Office in cooperation with the community college districts should coordinate a statewide study of community college transfer students, their performance after entering UC or CSU, and those elements that distinguish successful from unsuccessful transfers.

  The state should provide funding for those campuses that agree to participate in the study, and the results of the study should be published and disseminated on a statewide basis.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Generally, the community colleges have been highly successful in preparing students to work in business, industry, and public service.

There are, however, areas that have been identified that should be addressed in order to improve or strengthen vocational education and employment training opportunities for residents of California. Some of these include: facility and equipment needs; linking counseling and training to the job market; improved articulation between K-12, community colleges, UC and CSU; program accountability and faculty development.

Recommendations

- The governance and delivery of public vocational education programs (short-term certificate, associate and transfer) should be maintained through existing structures.

- The state should provide funding so that employment and training needs data can be acquired on a state, regional and local basis to ensure that programs and counseling are attuned to the local, regional and state job market. Such data should be used also for cooperative planning efforts with business, labor, education and local government.

- Support should be given to legislation which expands efforts to encourage business and industry to aid in updating faculty and equipment.

- The UC, CSU and community colleges should continue cooperative efforts in the establishment of vocational education transfer programs for those occupations that have a baccalaureate level.

  Close program and course articulation should occur at both the local and state levels, with faculty from the K-12 and postsecondary segments working on curriculum development.

- The high schools and the community colleges should establish closely articulated "2 + 2" vocational programs wherever such programs would meet local student and employer needs. The "2 + 2" programs should be linked with the UC and CSU programs wherever appropriate, providing "2 + 2 + 2" programs leading to baccalaureate degrees.

- To improve statewide accountability, follow-up data on former students must be developed and utilized; industry, business, labor and government representatives should be involved in evaluation within the accountability process and the statewide evaluation system should be integrated with the accreditation process.

- The State Capital Outlay Fund should provide continuing financial support for the replacement, upgrading and leasing of vocational education program equipment.

- Adequate funding should be provided for facilities construction and modification.

- Funding should be provided to assist in the upgrading and retraining of instructors in occupational programs.

REMEDIAL EDUCATION

California higher education over the next twenty years faces an unprecedented challenge of meeting the education needs of an increasingly diverse population.

Reforms now underway in secondary schools will take years to produce substantial overall improvement of high school students' academic performance. Thus, all segments of postsecondary education must continue enrolling under-prepared students and providing remedial education according to need.

An academic floor, while appealing to some who see it as helping improve expectations of secondary school students, would reduce access and, in the long run, reduce educational progress for many students.

All programs should stress the potential for students to achieve their educational goals.

Recommendations

- California community colleges should provide remedial education services based on the following principles:
  - California community colleges should continue to be the primary postsecondary provider of remedial education.
  - Local districts should be responsible for developing remedial programs to meet local remediation needs and setting standards of satisfactory progress.
  - Local districts should use coordinated testing, and develop counseling and monitoring programs that encourage students to enroll in courses in which they can succeed and progress.
  - Local districts, in coordination with the California Community College Chancellor's Office, should improve research efforts in order to provide relevant and timely reports to the Board of Governors on student progress and program effectiveness.
- Remedial services and courses should be based on the following guidelines:
  - To identify students who may have need for remedial assistance, mandatory assessment, testing (using appropriately selected and normed tests), placement in appropriate level courses, and follow-up and counseling or advising with the objective of improving student performance should be required.
  - Competency skill levels should be specified in academic and vocational courses.
  - Students should be counseled to enroll in appropriate remedial course(s) the first semester of registration in vocational and academic programs.
  - Concurrent enrollment should be allowed in college level courses where students have the necessary skills to succeed.
  - Colleges should develop articulation activities with feeder high school districts.
  - Student progress should be monitored through a comprehensive college system of counseling, advising, tutoring, follow-up, and evaluation.
  - Students in remedial courses who fail to make satisfactory progress toward Associate Degree or transfer level courses could be referred to supplementary options.
- Financial aid should be available to all students with need who are enrolled in remedial courses who are making satisfactory progress toward Associate Degree and/or transfer level courses.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Recommendation

- Community colleges should be permitted to offer any community service classes and activities which reflect the needs and interests of the local population, so long as they are supported by user fees which cover their costs.

Community colleges are the one segment of California's higher education system that has been severely underfunded since 1978, and this underfunding has accelerated the problems of meeting the vast educational needs of California's diverse citizenry.

It is the primary function of the State to provide sufficient funds through forward-funding procedures which provide adequate time for effective planning and local district budget development. Lack of a consistent basis for funding severely limits long-range planning which is key to meeting educational needs.

The State should provide funding to meet the cost of maintaining the comprehensive mission of California's community colleges. While the State maintains that responsibility, the authority for implementing California community college funding statutes and program needs should be provided to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors.

Locally-elected boards of trustees should have flexibility in determining how state funds will be allocated in meeting local higher education needs in conformance with the guidelines established by the Board of Governors. In order to achieve the above, it will be necessary for all those interested in California's community colleges to work cooperatively for the benefit of the students which we serve.

Recommendations

- Community colleges should receive support from a combination of local and state revenues.

- The following concepts should be included in a community college finance program:
  - Formulas controlling the distribution of state funds should provide for equity among California's community colleges.
  - Inflationary adjustments should be provided community college districts annually in order to maintain quality educational programs.
  - Additional funds should be provided to accommodate reasonable growth within the community college system. Growth funding formulas, however, should not become operational until adequate equity/inflation is achieved.
  - A procedure should be developed whereby recent significant enrollment decline can be restored without being subjected to the growth limitation in current statute.
  - In the interest of providing increased stability, the financial impact of declining enrollment should be phased.
  - The basic distribution funding mechanism for instruction, student services, operation and maintenance and other institutional support services should be provided, using formulas which more accurately reflect cost of performing the community college mission.
  - Student full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE), based on student contact hours, should be used as the workload measure for funding instruction, counseling, and library resources.
  - A comprehensive capital outlay funding program should be enacted which is equitable and capable of responding to the dynamics of change and the corresponding need to construct new or rehabilitate existing facilities.
  - Adequate funding should be provided for deferred maintenance and equipment acquisition/replacement.
  - Local districts should be allocated revenue over and above that provided in the revenue base in order to establish new programs and services and respond to changing educational needs on a project application basis.

GOVERNANCE

The governance structure for community colleges should provide the powers, duties and decisionmaking structures necessary to deliver the mission with excellence and accountability.

Both the local districts and the Board of Governors must recognize the legitimate needs of the state for relevant and timely information on program and student outcomes.

The most appropriate governance structure is the one in which the local districts have the authority and resources to provide quality education opportunities to meet community needs and the state Board of Governors has the authority to provide leadership in broad areas of education policy.

Effective decisionmaking by the Board of Governors is enhanced when it directly involves the local districts. Similarly, the local districts are governed by their boards of trustees in partnership with the board's chief executive officer and the faculty. Effective decisionmaking by a board of trustees is enhanced when it directly involves those responsible for implementation of the district's education program.

Recommendations

- The governance structure that can best provide excellence in education services and accountability to state and local interests is one of shared governance in which the legislature, Governor, the Board of Governors, and the local districts (trustees, staff and students) all have defined roles and responsibilities.

- The legislature and Governor should focus on deciding the broad mission of the community colleges, expressing broad expectations to the colleges, indicating generally how the system should interact with the other segments of education, and determining the broad finance mechanism and appropriate revenues for the colleges.

- The Board of Governors should provide leadership, direction and general oversight to local districts through planning establishment of state priorities, formulation of broad state policy, development of a state budget, establishment of minimum standards, program review and approval, and systemwide representation regarding community college development and personnel administration.

- Locally elected district boards should be responsible for operating districts, local planning and policy formulation, setting the priorities for educational programming, budget development and personnel administration.

- While the ultimate legal responsibility remains with locally elected governing boards, the right of faculty and other staff to collectively bargain locally is reaffirmed.

The academic senate of a community college should have the primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.

Faculty should share the responsibility of hiring and evaluating their peers.

Faculty and other staff should play an important role in budget development and review.

- The Board of Governors, working with local boards, chief executive officers and local faculty leaders, should establish a consultation and communication process that emphasizes institutional response in state policy formulation, planning, state budget development and program review.

- Local boards, working with faculty and other staff, should establish consultation and communication procedures within their respective districts to ensure participation, of the faculty and other staff, in shaping the institutional response provided to the Board of Governors.

- The Board of Governors, working with local districts, should strengthen accountability in the California community colleges by implementing the following steps:

  - Creation of student outcome evaluation criteria that would be consistent among districts.

  - Establishment of local institutional goals based on the statewide evaluation criteria, state education policy and local community expectations.

  - Documentation by districts of progress made toward achieving those goals.

  - Development of a statewide data base in the Chancellor's Office to document statewide relevant data on the evaluation criteria.

  - Issuance of periodic reports and analysis to the legislature, Governor, local districts and public relative to the academic progress being made by students.

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES
MAY 23 1986